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## ABSTRACT

Only a few general principles are provided as a foundation for an effective program. However, what is new is the emphasis on human groups as a basis for organizing a single social studies discipline. Some questions are suggested concerning what should be investigated about groups, and what the students need to understand. 1) What causes human groups to form, to change, to disintegrate? 2) What holds groups together--ideas, beliefs, values? 3) How are these ideas expressed in groups --art, artifacts, rituals, myths? 4) How is group control acquired, exercised, maintained, or lost? 5) What is acceptable behavior within the group? 6) Who interacts with whom, why, and how? 7) How is the group affected by other groups or its environment? 8) What creates conflict and how is it resolved? These are questions equally useful in the study of nations or neighborhoods, culture, or classroom cliques. Questions such as these require the student to use all the cognitive processes and lead him to discover powerful concepts. Critical thinking skills lead to understanding and creative generalizations about human behavior: observation, classification, measurement, inference, hypotheses making and verification, prediction, definition, interpretation, and the use of relationships. The objective, rational study of values and value differences are the essential ground for the content and process with first hand observation of social action as the most powerful learning tool. (Author/SBE)

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# A Rationale for Social Studies



# A Rationale for Social Studies

Marion Brady

Howard L. Brady

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# Foreword

It has been some years since the publication of the last social studies guide. During these years, major changes in instruction have occurred in language arts, physical science, mathematics, and other school subjects. Generally, these changes have been welcomed and accepted.

Much has been happening in the social studies also. A great many ideas and techniques for improving our social studies classes are being proposed and discussed. However, it would be inaccurate to say that change of any consequence has found wide acceptance. For most students, the new social studies seems years away.

It is not surprising that change comes more slowly to the social studies than to other content areas. Man is the subject of the social studies, and man is inherently complex. Many approaches are possible—but not all of these approaches build toward a coherent, articulated program.

If a study of man is to have focus, balance, and internal consistency, choices are necessary. Certain objectives will have to be rejected. Chosen objectives will have to be ranked in order of emphasis. Teaching strategies consistent with these objectives must be determined. In short, this area of study needs a rationale.

That is the purpose of this short publication. It attempts to present, as clearly and concisely as possible, a rationale for social studies. We believe that it encompasses much of what the literature in the field calls "new," that it is consistent with good learning theory, and that it is grounded firmly in sound social science. We hope it is a step toward a new social studies for Florida schools.



*Floyd R. Christian*

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# PROCESSES

# **What's Happening In Our Social Studies Classes?**

**LET'S TAKE A LOOK—**

## FROM A CLASSROOM DISCUSSION:

"The Federal Government needs money for the kinds of operations we've been discussing. How many different sources of federal revenue can you name? Ramón?"

"Well, there's federal income tax, of course, and corporation taxes, import duties, taxes on cigarettes and liquor, and, uh . . ."

"Very good. Can anyone else add to this list? Tony?"

"Isn't there some kind of federal tax on long-distance telephone calls?"

"Right. What about some sources of revenue that aren't called taxes? Does anybody remember any? Yes, Jim?"

"When I applied for my citizen's band radio license, I had to pay a license fee. Isn't this another kind of revenue?"

"License fees are a significant source of federal revenue. Let's look at the chart on page 327 to see the relative importance of these taxes and revenue sources."

## FROM AN EXAM PAPER:

- 13. Before they came to New England, some of the Pilgrims lived in the city of (a) Amsterdam, (b) Paris, (c) Leyden, (d) Lisbon.
- 14. The first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony was (a) Miles Standish, (b) John Winthrop, (c) John Smith, (d) Roger Williams.
- 15. The founders of Harvard College were most interested in preparing students to be (a) ministers, (b) doctors, (c) lawyers, (d) political leaders.

## **FROM ANOTHER DISCUSSION:**

"Pretty good, Jim. You've given all but one of the factors that tended to hold the Greek city-states together. Which one did he leave out?"

"I know!"

"O.K., Janet."

"Language. All the Greeks spoke the same language, and this was a common bond between them."

"Do you agree, Nick?"

"Yeah, I'm pretty sure that's the last one."

"Right. Now let's move on to the reasons the Greek city-states didn't combine into a single political entity. Hazel?"

"Well, for one thing, Greece is a very mountainous place. It was hard to get from city to city and so the poor communication was a problem."

"Good start. What was another factor?"

"Well, uh . . . just a second . . . I can close my eyes and almost . . . Jealousy! That was another problem."

"O.K. Let's give someone else a chance."

## **FROM A 5th GRADE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:**

"For tonight, I'd like you to continue reading about Latin America —the four pages which discuss Argentina.

"Pay particular attention to the main ways that the people of Argentina make a living, and be able to locate the areas in Argentina where these occupations are important."

## **SOME BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES FOR A STUDY UNIT:**

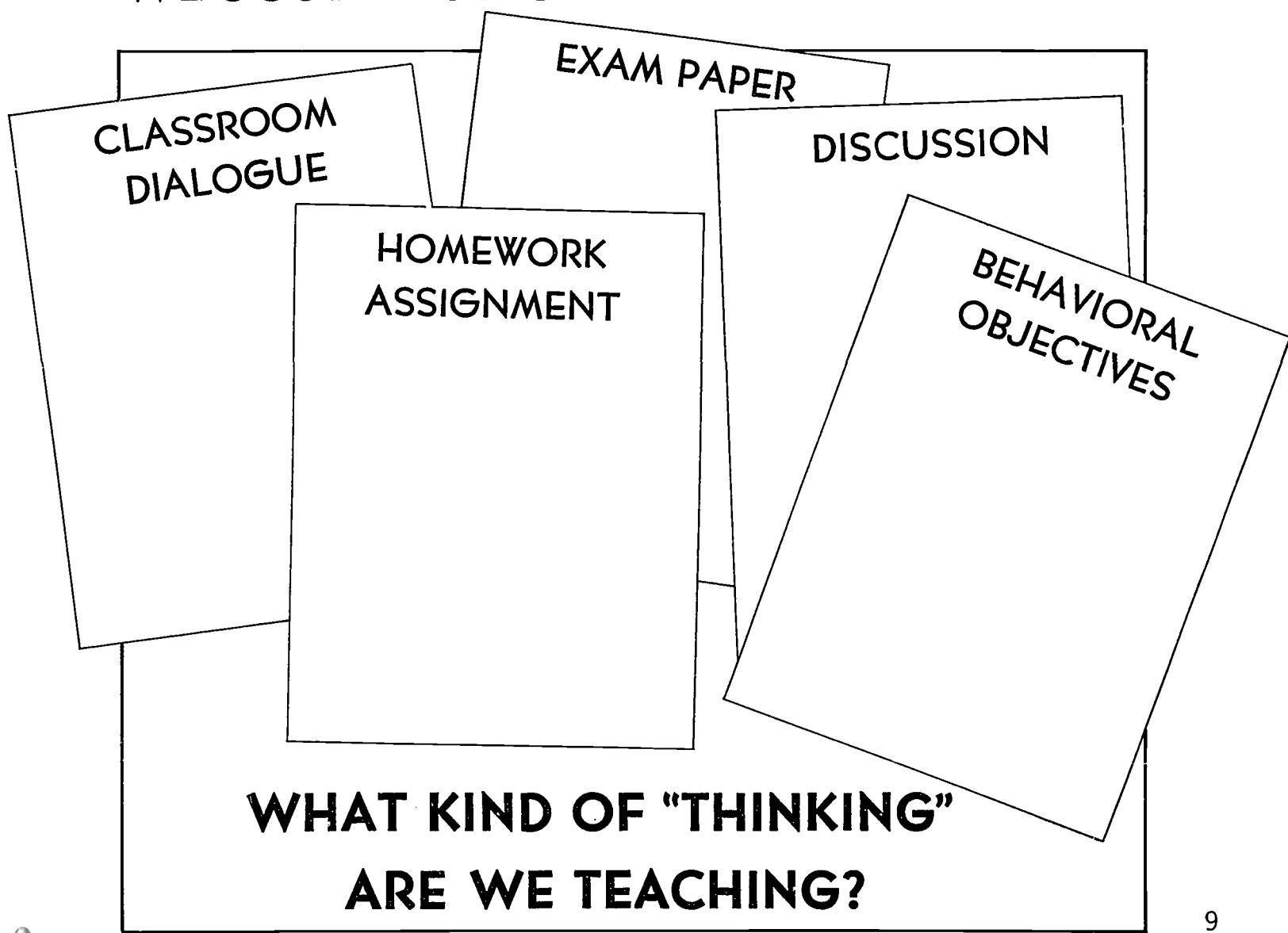
Given a list of the ten largest nations of the world by population, the student will be able to identify the major political leader and the political and economic systems utilized in at least nine of those nations.

The student will be able to name the military alliances in which the United States participates, and identify the member nations in each alliance.

FOR YEARS,  
EDUCATORS HAVE AGREED THAT  
A PRIMARY GOAL OF OUR  
SCHOOLS IS

***Teaching Students To Think.***

**TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT  
THOSE TYPICAL SAMPLES  
WE JUST PASSED—**



IN THESE EXAMPLES—  
AND IN OUR  
SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOMS—  
MUCH OF THE THINKING  
WE ARE TEACHING IS  
*Remembering*

BUT THERE'S MORE TO  
*Thinking*  
THAN  
*Remembering*

**BESIDES "REMEMBERING,"  
THERE ARE THE THINKING PROCESSES**

***Comparing***  
***Classifying***  
***Generalizing***

**(- JUST TO BEGIN A LIST)**

## **ONE OF THE BETTER-KNOWN LISTS OF THINKING SKILLS IS THIS ONE:**

**1.00 Knowledge [Remembering]**

**2.00 Comprehension**

**3.00 Application**

**4.00 Analysis**

**5.00 Synthesis**

**6.00 Evaluation**

From,

BENJAMIN S. BLOOM, ED.,  
TAXONOMY OF EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES,  
COGNITIVE DOMAIN, LONGMANS, GREEN, 1956.

---

**IF WE MAINTAIN THAT WE'RE  
TEACHING STUDENTS TO THINK,  
THEY MUST BE ENGAGED  
IN ALL THESE PROCESSES.**

## **HERE'S A FAIRLY SIMPLE COMPOSITE LIST OF THESE THINKING SKILLS:**

- *Recall***
- *Compare***
- *Abstract***
- *Classify***
- *Integrate***
- *Infer***
- *Hypothesize***
- *Generalize***
- *Predict***

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE  
ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE (AAAS)  
HAS DEVELOPED AN ELEMENTARY  
SCIENCE PROGRAM. THE PROGRAM  
LISTS THESE THINKING SKILLS:

- **Observe**
- **Classify**
- **Measure**
- **Infer**
- **Make Hypotheses**
- **Verify Hypotheses**
- **Predict**
- **Define Operationally**
- **Interpret Data**
- **Use Relationships**

**WHAT WOULD STUDENTS BE DOING  
IF INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES  
REQUIRED THEM TO USE THESE  
THINKING SKILLS?**

**LET'S LOOK:**

17

---

## **DISCUSSION:**

"Of course that's a problem," Ellen retorted, "but I don't think it's as serious as Jack says it is."

"I'm with Ellen," said Cliff. "Sure, U.S. Presidents have complicated personalities, but that doesn't mean you can't call them 'strong' or 'weak.' She means mostly that when presidential candidates are campaigning, they either come on like they're going to change things or they don't."

"Thanks, Cliff," continued Ellen. "All I'm saying is that, in the eight campaigns I've studied so far, Americans seem more interested in domestic than foreign affairs at election time, and, when things are going good, they aren't interested in social reform or anything else that threatens change."

Jack tried again. "Just the same, I think you ought to work out what you mean by 'strong' and 'weak' and put that in a preface or something."

## **Generalizing From Historical Content**

## **FROM AN EXAM PAPER:**

3. Here is an Indian story about how the earth was created. Read it over carefully, and when you have finished, try to decide which of the Indian tribes we have studied would be most likely to believe it was true. Give all the reasons you can for your answer.

## **Inferring From Data**

## **ANOTHER DISCUSSION:**

"It just doesn't make any sense," repeated Jill. "These two subdivisions were built at the same time, are almost exactly the same size, are the same distance from downtown, and have houses in the same price range...."

"And yet one has twice as much vandalism as the other," continued Carlos.

"Maybe the police patrol one better than the other," volunteered Cynthia.

"Checked that," said Jill. "No difference."

"Well, it certainly isn't accidental," Mr. Fokes observed. "It's been the same way for nearly fifteen years."

"Yeah. But why... why?"

## **First-Hand Data Collection - Direct Data Analysis**

## **A HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:**

For tonight—

A recent book (Ardrey's **The Territorial Imperative**) suggests that all animals, including humans, have a built-in drive to possess a territory, and will fight if that territory is invaded. Skim your world history text and see if the record of conflicts there seems to support this hypothesis. Support your opinion.

## **Hypothesis Testing Using Historical Data**

## **BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:**

4. Upon completion of this unit, the student will:
  - A. Be able to classify and categorize major personality characteristics of randomly selected Saturday morning TV cartoon characters.
  - B. Be able, on the basis of the above activity, to make inferences about personality traits considered desirable in American culture.

## **Expected Analytical Operations**

IF WE ATTEMPT TO DEVISE CLASSROOM  
ACTIVITIES OR EXAM QUESTIONS THAT  
USE THESE THINKING SKILLS

## ***Cognitive Processes***

—WE DISCOVER QUICKLY THAT THEY  
OVERLAP EACH OTHER QUITE A BIT.

(A SINGLE QUESTION MIGHT INVOLVE  
THE STUDENTS IN TWO OR THREE  
SKILLS.)

**—SO, WE CAN USE ANY GOOD COGNITIVE SKILLS LIST.**

**BUT (AND THIS IS BASIC) —**

**WE MUST CONTINUALLY INVOLVE OUR STUDENTS IN A VARIETY OF THESE VERY IMPORTANT THINKING PROCESSES—**

**PROCESSES WHICH TEACH THE STUDENTS TO CREATE NEW IDEAS, NOT JUST SOAK UP OLD KNOWLEDGE.**

**IT IS A MISTAKE TO ASSUME THAT STUDENTS WITH LOW ABILITY CAN ENGAGE IN ONLY CERTAIN COGNITIVE PROCESSES, WHILE STUDENTS WITH GREATER ABILITY CAN USE ALL THINKING SKILLS.**

**EVERY CHILD USES A FULL RANGE OF COGNITIVE PROCESSES IN SIMPLE WAYS LONG BEFORE HE STARTS SCHOOL.**

**WHAT WE NEED ARE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES WHICH HELP STUDENTS BECOME INCREASINGLY SKILLFUL IN APPLYING ALL THESE PROCESSES.**

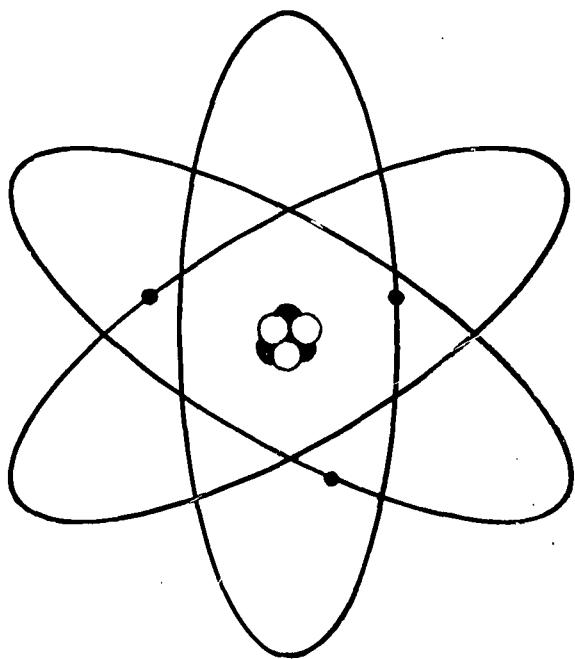
**THERE ARE THOSE WHO FEEL THAT  
TEACHING THE YOUNG TO THINK  
IS ENOUGH. IT ISN'T.**

**COGNITIVE PROCESSES HAVE TO BE  
APPLIED. EACH AREA OF STUDY  
HAS ITS OWN—**

# CONTENT

THE OBJECTIVE OF  
ALL THESE THINKING  
PROCESSES IS  
***Understanding***

**TO "UNDERSTAND"  
MEANS TO KNOW HOW A THING  
IS PUT TOGETHER AND  
HOW IT USUALLY BEHAVES.**



**SOME SCIENTISTS TRY TO  
UNDERSTAND THINGS CALLED**

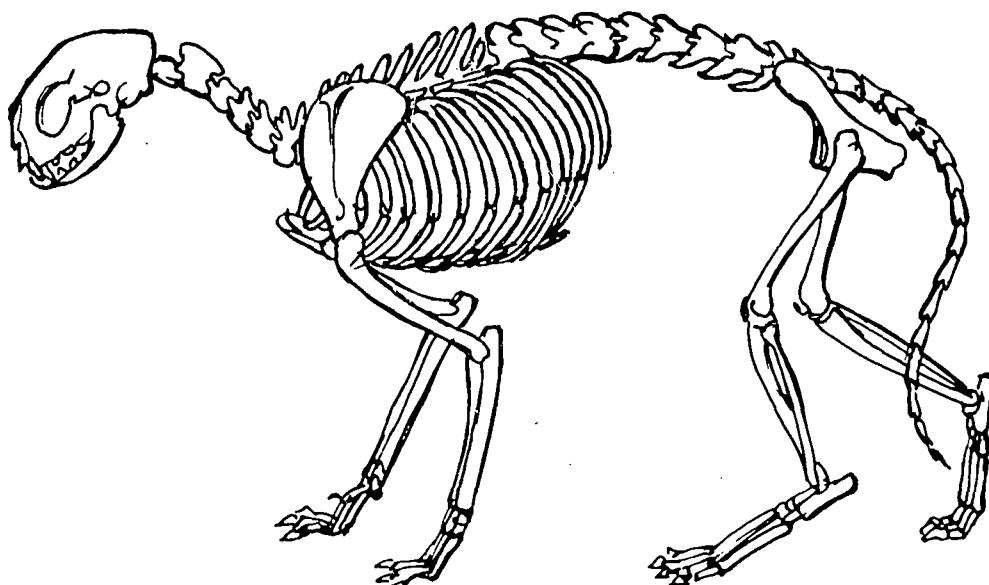
***Atoms***

**(THEY STUDY HOW ATOMS ARE PUT  
TOGETHER AND HOW THEY  
USUALLY BEHAVE.)**

**SOME SCIENTISTS TRY TO  
UNDERSTAND THINGS CALLED**

***Vertebrates***

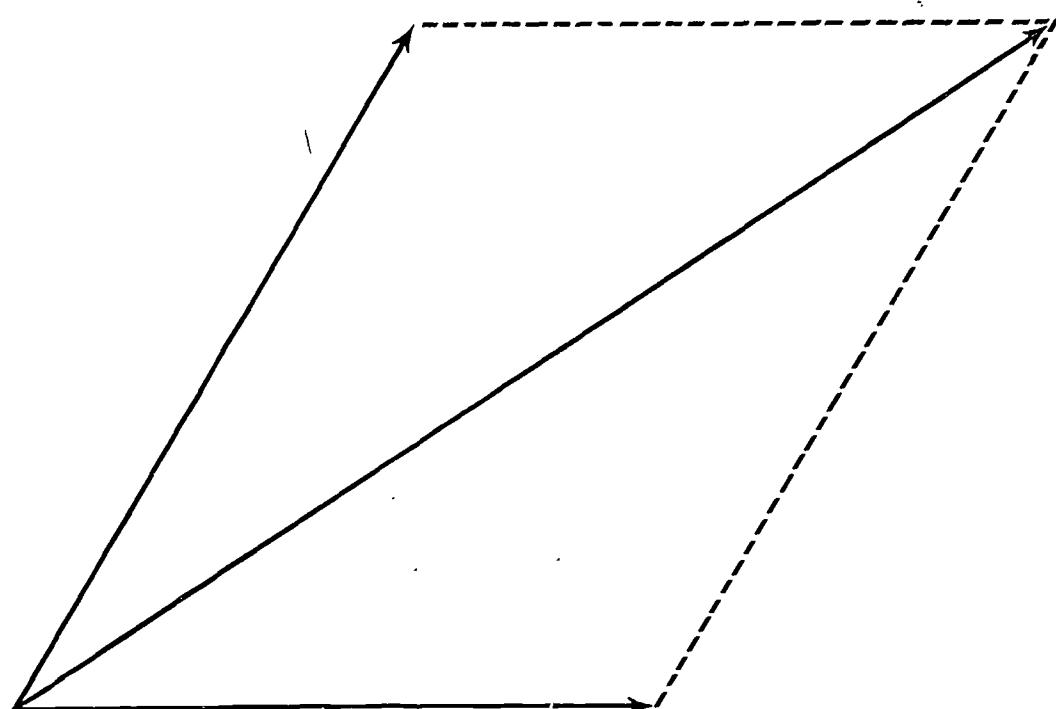
**(THEY STUDY HOW SOME KINDS  
OF ANIMALS ARE PUT TOGETHER  
AND HOW THEY USUALLY BEHAVE.)**



OTHER SCIENTISTS TRY TO  
UNDERSTAND THINGS CALLED

## ***Structural Forces***

(THEY STUDY HOW MECHANICAL  
SYSTEMS ARE PUT TOGETHER  
AND HOW THEY USUALLY BEHAVE.)



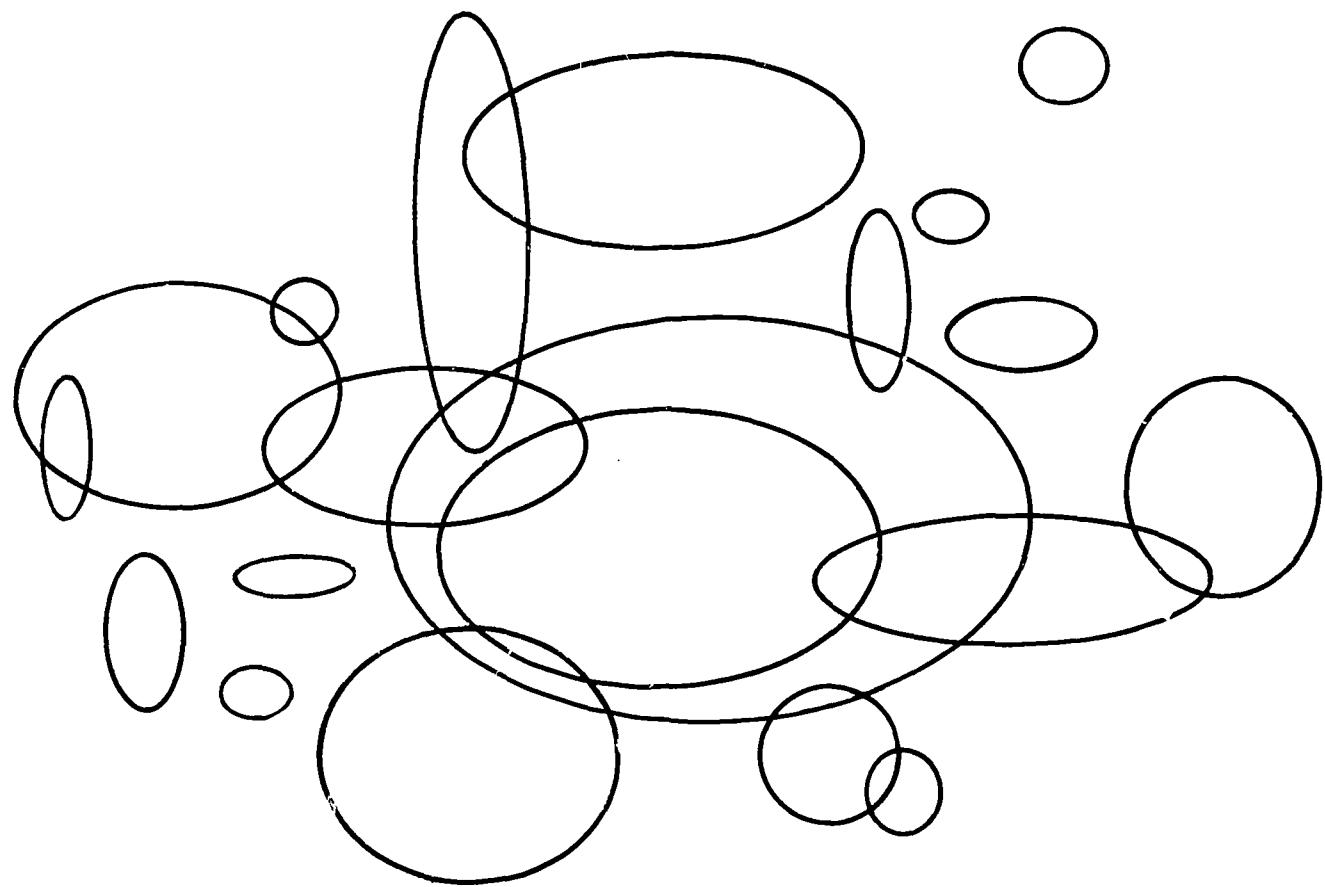


**SOCIAL SCIENTISTS TRY TO  
UNDERSTAND THINGS CALLED  
*Human Groups***



---

**(SOCIAL SCIENTISTS STUDY  
HOW HUMAN GROUPS  
ARE PUT TOGETHER AND  
HOW THEY USUALLY BEHAVE.)**

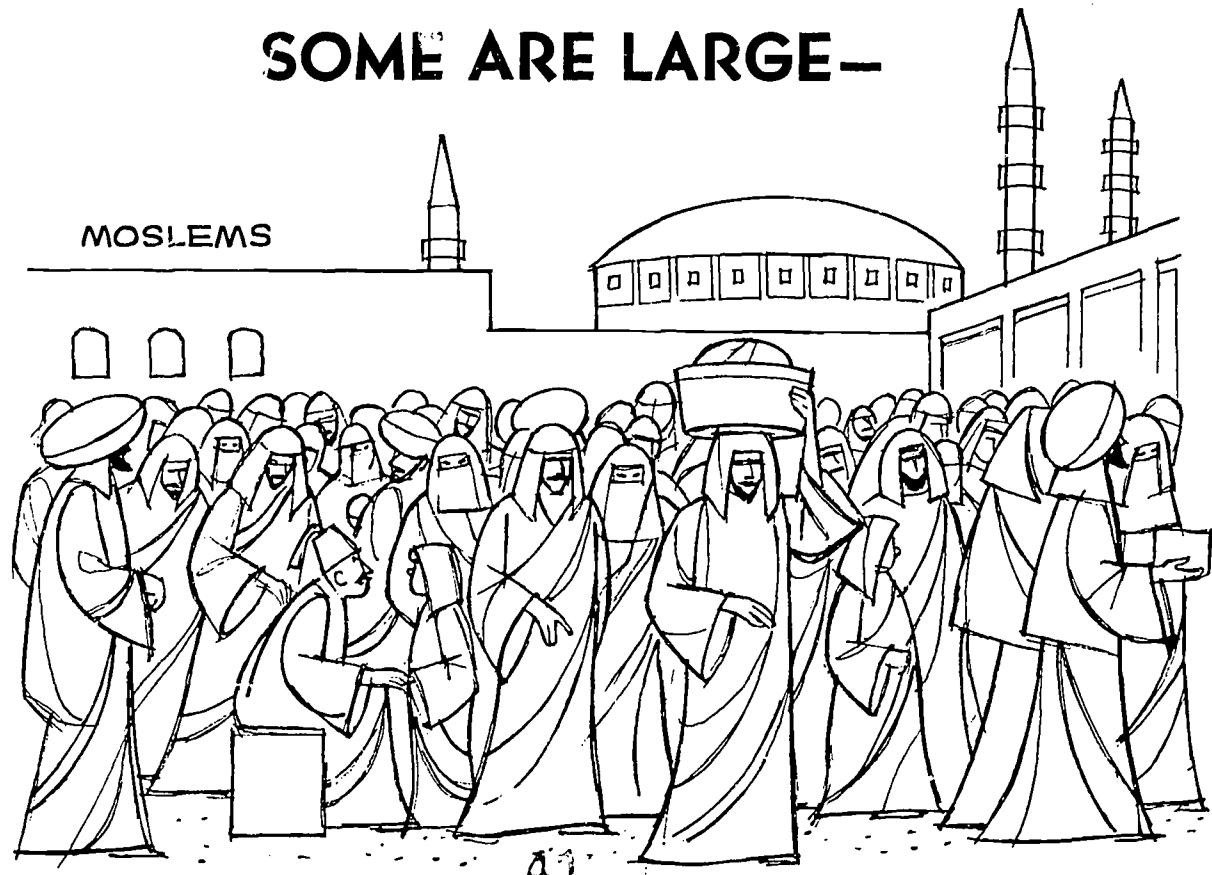


**HUMAN GROUPS DIFFER, OF COURSE.**



CHINESE

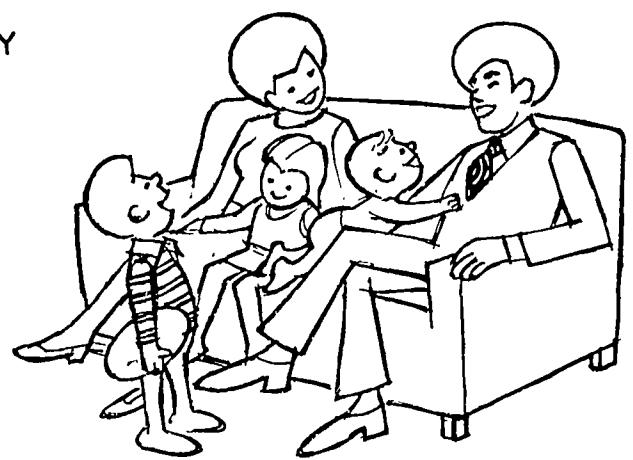
**SOME ARE LARGE—**



MOSLEMS

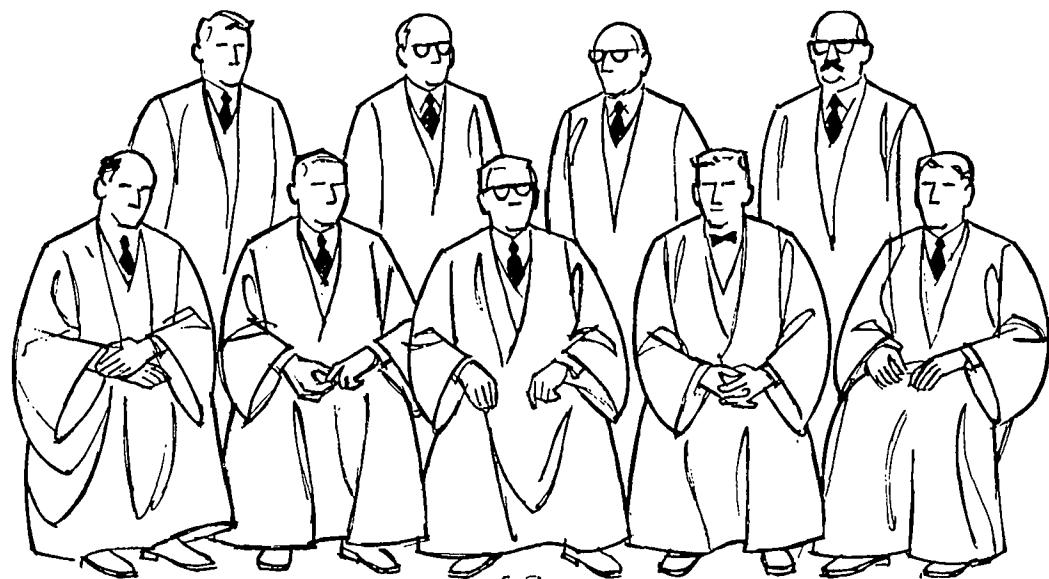


FAMILY



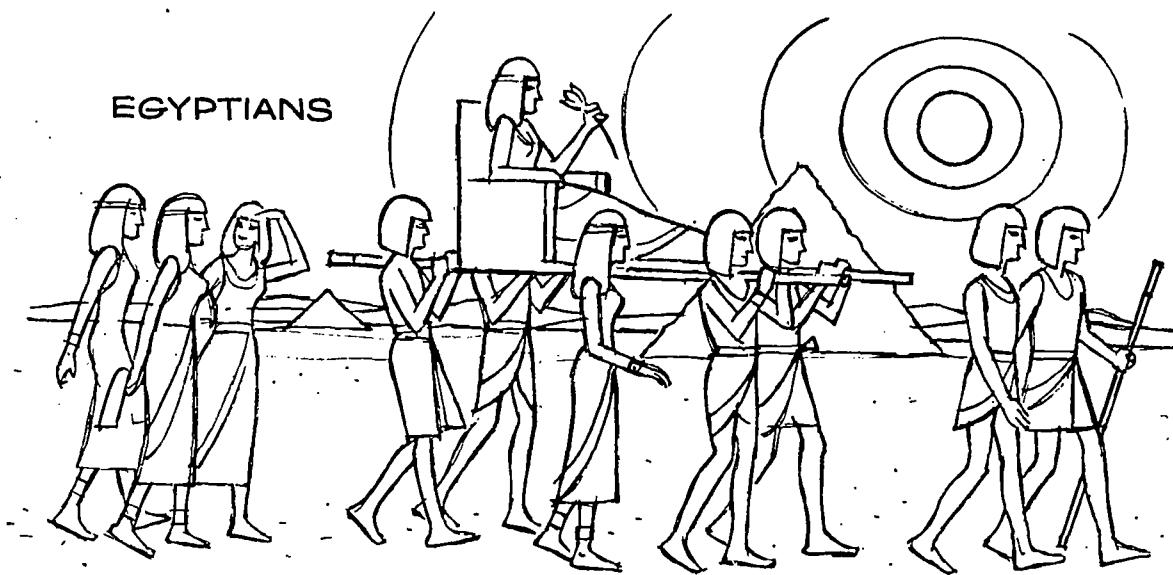
## SOME ARE SMALL -

SUPREME COURT





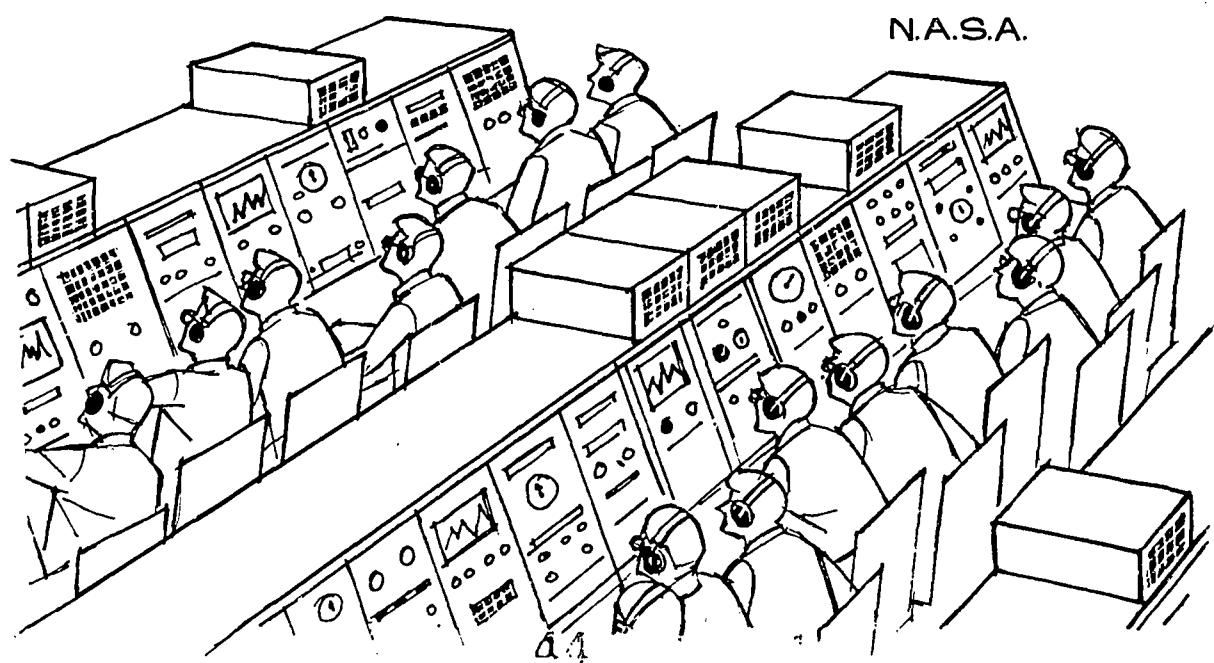
## SOME ARE ANCIENT—





NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN

## SOME ARE NEW —

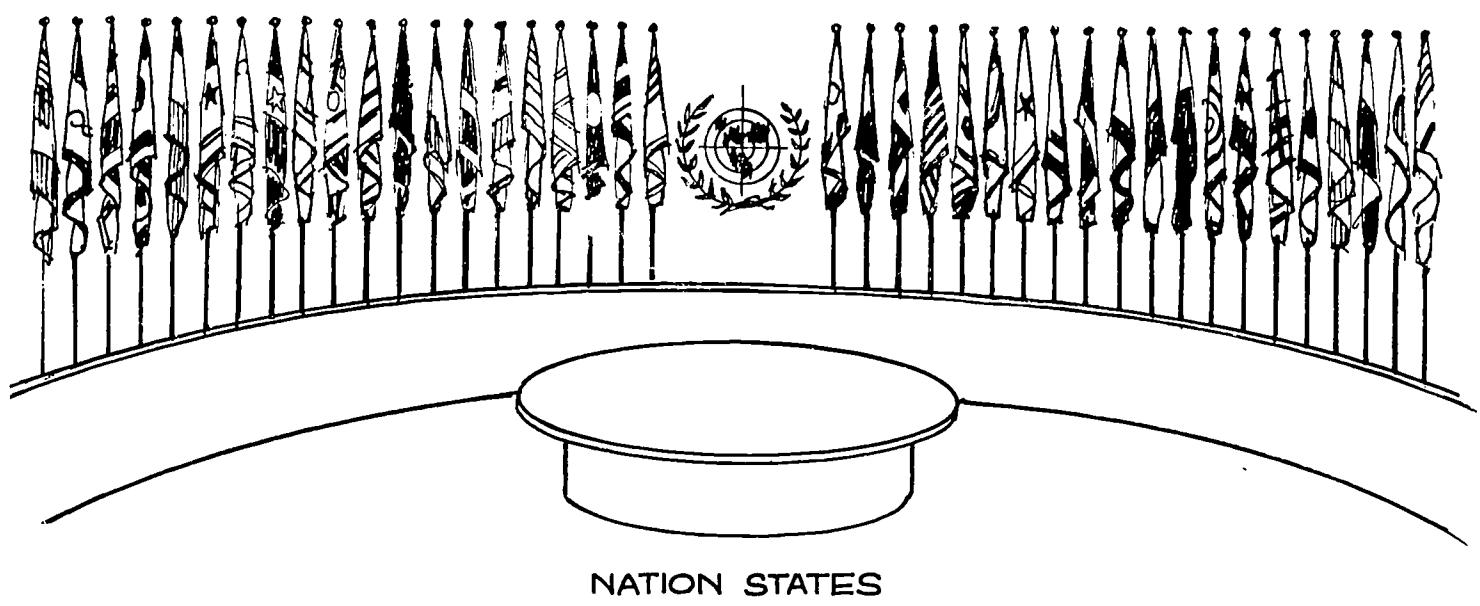




FLAT EARTH SOCIETY

## SOME GROUPS ARE RELATIVELY SIMPLE—





**SOME ARE  
VERY COMPLEX—**



BUDDHISTS

## SOME HUMAN GROUPS LAST FOR CENTURIES—

ROMANS





HOW-ARE-WE-GONNA-GET-OUT-OF-  
THIS-STUCK-ELEVATOR?

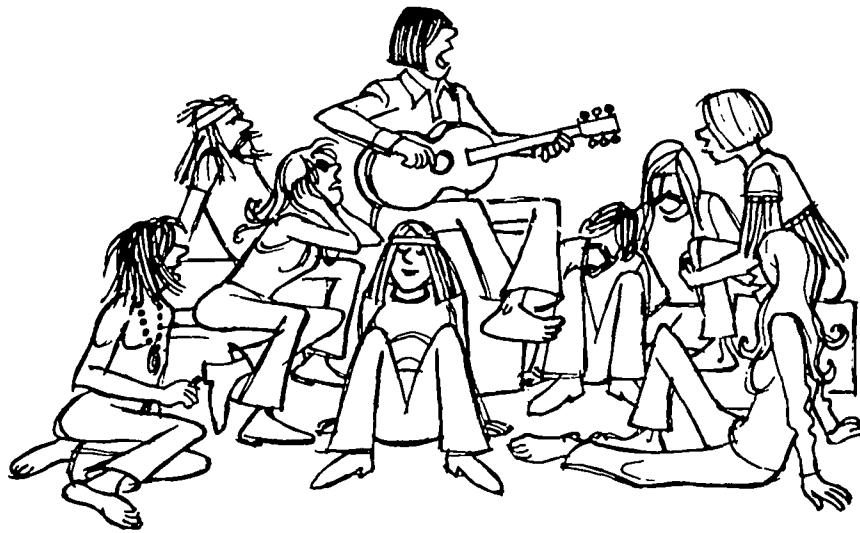
**SOME FOR ONLY A FEW MOMENTS—**

**BUT WITH ALL THEIR DIFFERENCES,  
SOCIAL SCIENTISTS AGREE  
THAT HUMAN GROUPS ARE  
MORE ALIKE THAN DIFFERENT.**

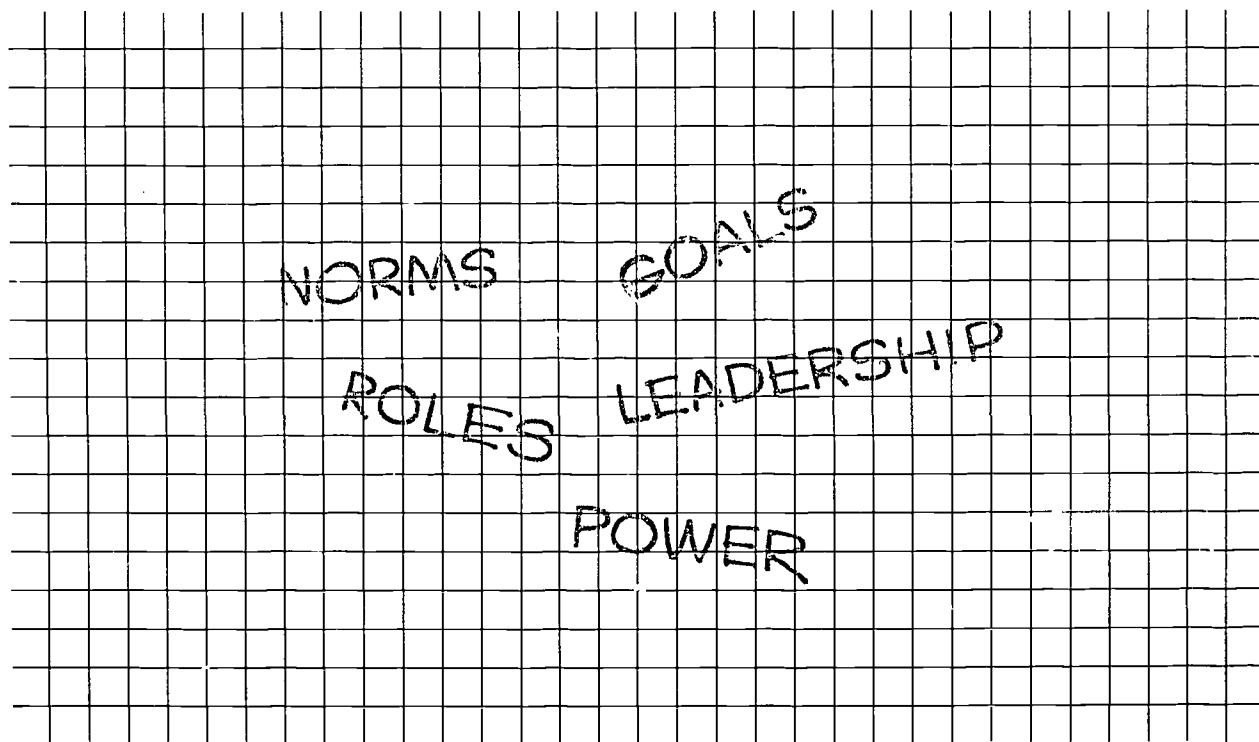
**IN FACT, HUMAN GROUPS ARE  
ENOUGH ALIKE THAT AN INTENSIVE  
STUDY OF A FEW CAN TEACH  
MUCH ABOUT ALL.**

**FOR EXAMPLE, NEARLY EVERY  
GROUP HAS**

## ***Social Class Structure***



**SOCIAL CLASS STRUCTURE IS JUST ONE  
OF MANY CHARACTERISTICS WHICH  
MOST HUMAN GROUPS SHARE.**



**WE CAN USE SHARED CHARACTERISTICS  
AS A GUIDE FOR THE STUDY OF ANY  
HUMAN GROUP.**

The traditional social studies disciplines do not fit together to form a recognizable, coherent whole; each has grown in random fashion, developing its own jargon, peculiar emphases, and poorly defined boundaries. The disciplines overlap haphazardly and extensively. There is need for an approach to social studies that can give unity and simplicity.

This unity and simplicity can be obtained only when the focus of study can be made precise. We must draw boundaries around something small enough to be intellectually manageable, and coherent enough to provide a network of related ideas. Identifying human groups as the explicit phenomena with which social studies deals is an easy but essential first step.

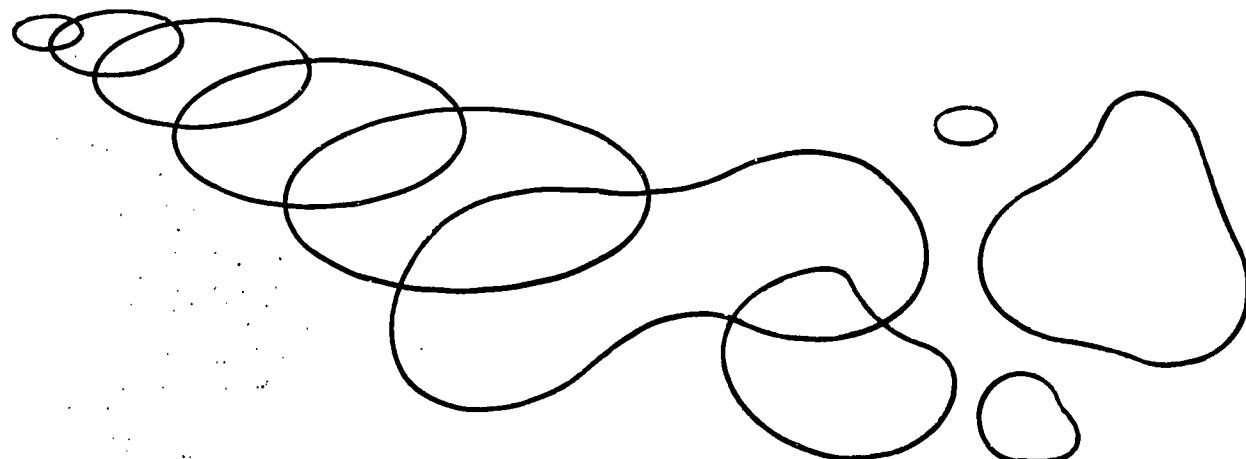
Studying human groups in the social sciences is not revolutionary. History, anthropology, sociology, social psychology, political science, economics, and geography have always studied human groups. What is new is emphasis on human groups as a basis for organizing a **single** social studies discipline.

**WHAT KINDS OF THINGS  
SHOULD WE BE INVESTIGATING  
ABOUT HUMAN GROUPS?  
WHAT DOES THE STUDENT  
NEED TO UNDERSTAND?**

**SOME QUESTIONS CAN BE SUGGESTED –**

## WHAT CAUSES HUMAN GROUPS

- **To Form?**
- **To Change?**
- **To Disintegrate?**

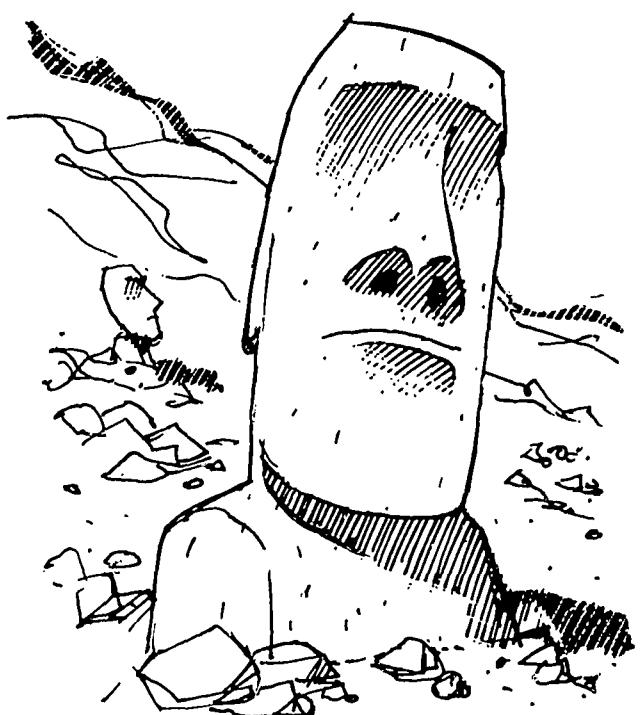


## WHAT

- **Ideas**
- **Beliefs**
- **Values**

## HOLD GROUPS TOGETHER?

## HOW ARE THESE IDEAS EXPRESSED IN THE GROUP'S

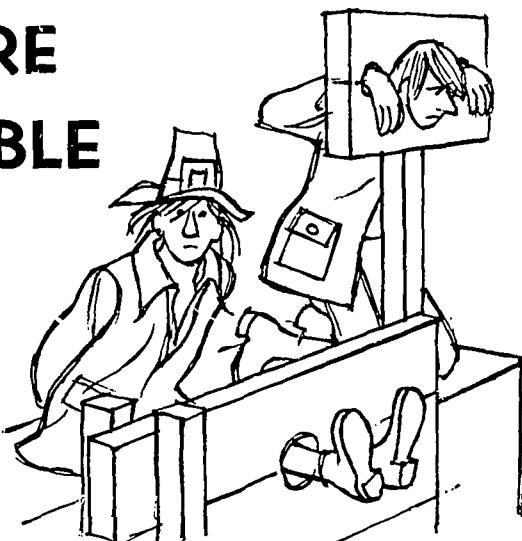


- **Art?**
- **Artifacts?**
- **Rituals?**
- **Myths?**

## **MORE QUESTIONS:**

**WHO EXERCISES GROUP CONTROL?  
HOW IS THIS CONTROL ACQUIRED  
AND MAINTAINED?  
HOW IS IT LOST?**

**WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR  
WITHIN THE GROUP?  
WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO  
DON'T ADHERE  
TO ACCEPTABLE  
BEHAVIOR?**



**WHO INTERACTS WITH WHOM?**  
**WHAT KIND OF INTERACTION?**  
**WHY DO THEY INTERACT?**

**HOW IS THE GROUP AFFECTED BY**  
**— OTHER GROUPS?**  
**— ITS ENVIRONMENT?**

**WHAT CREATES CONFLICT?**  
**HOW IS THE CONFLICT RESOLVED?**

THESE ARE "UNIVERSAL" QUESTIONS,  
EQUALLY USEFUL IN THE STUDY OF  
NATIONS OR NEIGHBORHOODS,  
CULTURES OR CLASSROOM CLIQUES.

QUESTIONS SUCH AS THESE REQUIRE  
THE STUDENT TO USE ALL THE  
COGNITIVE PROCESSES.

THEY LEAD HIM TO DISCOVER POWERFUL  
CONCEPTS, CONCEPTS WHICH  
ENCOMPASS AND STRUCTURE VAST  
AMOUNTS OF INFORMATION

AND LEAD ULTIMATELY TOWARD  
UNDERSTANDING— OUR REAL GOAL.

PROCESS AND CONTENT IN THE FORMS  
WE HAVE PROPOSED LEAD THE  
STUDENT AWAY FROM PARTICULARISTIC  
KNOWLEDGE, AND FORCE HIM TO  
CREATE AND REFINE GENERALIZATIONS.

PARTICULARISTIC KNOWLEDGE IS  
USEFUL ONLY IN SPECIFIC, PECULIAR  
CIRCUMSTANCES. GENERALIZATIONS  
ABOUT HUMAN BEHAVIOR ARE  
UNIVERSALLY USEFUL. THEY ARE THE  
KEY TO RELEVANCE IN THE SOCIAL  
STUDIES.

# NOTES

## VALUES:

The call for teaching values in the schools is growing stronger. If we investigate the motives for this demand, we find that many people are rightfully upset by certain kinds of behavior that increasingly characterize our youth—the penchant for violence, the obvious increase in drug use, juvenile crime for “kicks,” and similar phenomena.

The most frequent diagnosis of the cause of these kinds of behavior is, “These young people have not been taught the proper values.” If we assume this diagnosis is correct, then we are faced with two difficult questions:

- Which values are we supposed to teach?
- What techniques can we use to teach them successfully?

Let's start with the second question first—the techniques for teaching values.

Merely telling students “what's right”—which values they ought to hold—has little positive effect. Frequently, in fact, students assert their independence by pursuing different, even opposite values.

Learning values, like learning to swim or ride a bicycle, requires participative exercise. The only values that can be learned in the classroom are those that can be practiced in the classroom. Simple exposure does not produce acceptance. If the student is given the opportunity to test a value experimentally, and discover the “value of the value” for himself, only then will he truly accept it.

Values can be successfully learned in the classroom if the teacher helps the student develop the processes of value exploration, comparison, and evaluation, and then provides opportunities for the student to practice these processes.

The first question, “Which values are we supposed to teach?” is especially difficult. Teaching what “ought to be” inevitably creates conflicts. There is not now, nor is there ever likely to be, general agreement in America about what “ought to be.” “Freedom” to one man is “anarchy” to a second and “tyranny” to a third. Attempts to teach what “ought to be” will either paralyze social studies with irresolvable conflict, or else move dangerously close to totalitarian concepts of education.

Do we ignore values, then, because of this? Emphatically, no! Two areas of common value agreement in Western culture are a belief in the basic worth of the individual and a belief in rationality. The first of these values is largely learned within the confines of the child's home. Since it is not a process, there is little that can be done directly in the classroom to teach it except by the example of our own actions. It is the second of these values—rationality—for which the school has a definite and direct responsibility. Rational processes—avoiding premature judgment, collecting and weighing evidence, evaluating alternative conclusions—can be practiced and refined in the classroom. Furthermore, rationality will provide a sound basis for the student to evaluate what "ought to be" for himself. This is an essential skill, for in a changing world, no generation has all the answers for its successors.

There is another reason for emphasizing the study of values. When we begin to study human groups that differ from our own, shared values are perhaps the most important source of insight into group behavior. Objective, rational study of values and value differences are essential to social studies.

All of these pieces fit together. If a student is going to make an intelligent appraisal of any value, he must know the alternatives. Our responsibilities are these:

Our schools must provide opportunities for students to explore openly and without fear all values and their probable consequences.

We must help our students avoid the error of accepting ideas which are not true, just because they are passed on by some authority. If we teach our students to accept values without question, we reduce their ability to think and act creatively.

We must help the student avoid the opposite error—rejection of a value just because it is old. Students frequently tend to reject traditional ways, and rational appraisal of old but sound values can prevent such rejection.

The content and process of the social science we advocate is grounded in a concern for the development of values by the student. Within the school's sphere of responsibility, rationality is the foundation of intellectual development and maturity.

## INQUIRY:

In times when the world changed little or not at all, most of what the young needed to know was already known by the elders. The young respected their elders' knowledge, for its practicality was demonstrated daily. If the teachers in those times assumed an authoritarian stance, it fitted the situation.

But this is not such a time. Most of the knowledge we need to cope with our problems we don't yet possess, and even that which is known must be accepted as tentative. This is true in every area of study, but it is particularly true in social studies. We just don't know much about social man, and what little we know, we don't know how to use very effectively. When teachers in these times assume an authoritarian stance, it seems rather inappropriate.

What **is** appropriate? The extent of our ignorance suggests first of all that the main task is not merely to transmit but to expand knowledge. Our ignorance seems also to demand of all of us a considerable humility. We teachers know more, certainly, but not so much that we differ significantly from our students in our relationship to knowledge.

In these circumstances, a partnership is appropriate. Together, teachers and students should raise questions about social man, suggest possible answers and exploration, design ways to determine the truth or usefulness of those answers, and begin to shape theories and generalizations. Together, teachers and students should make mistakes, should follow blind alleys, should know frustration and failure. And these experiences should be valued, for they are both ways of learning and evidence of honest inquiry.

Unfortunately, we generally don't value such experiences. Most of us are afraid of publicly taking risks, afraid of failing, afraid of being imperfect, and afraid of not knowing, in advance, all the right answers. Traditional instruction, which makes most use of the relatively simple mental process of memory, isn't too threatening. Our guarantee that we'll know the answers is the reassurance that we've been through it all many times before. The student's guarantee against failure, if he cares, is that he's been through it the night before. When the name of the game is mostly "remember" and not "inquire," everyone at least has the security of knowing how to play, even if he doesn't play very well.

And so we are likely to resist change, particularly those of us who have been most successful in the old game. If we suspect that we might not do as well in a different context, we'll likely complain that the new way isn't really worthwhile and may hold out for "real education"—meaning memory work. Or, even more likely, when presented with a different way of approaching social studies, we'll righteously declare that "we've been doing that for years!"

If students and teachers are able to overcome their resistance to change, and accept the methods of inquiry, a new classroom spirit emerges. Participation and involvement in the learning process become exciting and stimulating for both teacher and student.

Times change, and teaching fads come and go, but "inquiry" is no fad. Inquiry is the path to understanding, the logical response to the desire to make things better in a world that won't stand still.

## INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

We're sometimes quick to maintain that no real change in teaching is possible until the quality of classroom materials is improved. Give us the tools, we say, and we'll do the job. Perhaps conveniently, this position places the responsibility for improvement on the administrators who decide how available funds will be distributed, or on the taxpayers who decide how much money will be spent on the education of the young.

There is, of course, no denying the importance of good instructional materials. We need all the help we can get. But the improvement of social studies teaching does not hinge on a constant supply of new materials. The "new" social studies isn't in a film can or game box or soon-to-be-released textbook series. Exciting, relevant, and effective instruction is certainly easier with some of the new materials, but the most poorly equipped classroom in the state can still support sophisticated learning activities rivaling those possible with the new aids.

Consider that most common of all social studies instructional supports—the American history textbook. It seems at first glance to be a most awkward tool to use in trying to understand human behavior. We ordinarily begin a study of something to be understood by grouping it with similar things so that they can be viewed simultaneously. If we want to understand hurricanes, we place all the available data about individual hurricanes together so that similarities and regularities are apparent. If we want to understand cancerous growths, we begin by separating them from noncancerous growths, and we proceed by further sorting and classifying on the basis of shared characteristics.

Most history books don't do that. They tell a story, and in the story "like" things are not placed together. The first account of a depression may occur on page 62, the second on page 114, the third still later, and so on. The "like" things (depressions or the qualities of popular leaders or the reasons Americans feel justified in going to war) are so separated in the book and in classroom instruction that comparison becomes ex-

tremely difficult. The isolated event may make interesting reading or telling, but it is a poor basis for generalizing. And generalizations are the practical, useful products of systematic study.

But this doesn't mean that new materials are necessary. For the student trying to gain insight into a puzzling aspect of human behavior, the textbook contains potentially useful data for comparative study. The data in the text can be used to investigate questions such as these:

Are Presidents more likely to be re-elected during difficult times?

In what similar ways have minorities reacted to discrimination? What has been the effect of their reactions?

Is rebellion in America increasing? Decreasing? Cyclical?

Are there liberal and conservative eras?

Is religious feeling constant or does it vary?

Is there pattern or regularity in whatever change occurs? To what might the peaks and valleys of religious feeling be attributed?

Once questions such as these are raised, the student's task is to abstract and rearrange the relevant data, making it work for him in ways the textbook author did not, in fact, could not, anticipate. The text may not have all the answers, but it can provide the student with enough data to form tentative conclusions, and guide his search for additional evidence.

What can be done with traditional history books is equally possible with other instructional materials. New process and content objectives can suggest uses for traditional materials which will allow them to rival the best of the new instructional aids.

## **MORE COMMENTS ON MATERIALS:**

Traditionally, social studies, like most other subjects, has leaned heavily on textbooks and other printed materials. The problem with printed materials is that somehow they imply to teachers and students alike that the basic sources for learning are on paper, that everything important about the course is on those printed pages. Consequently, (and often despite the teacher's best intentions), the field of inquiry for the student is extremely limited and sterile. The student becomes increasingly more dependent upon remote data and third-hand observation. The skills he needs in his adult life—the ability to collect, analyze, and evaluate the live, rich data surrounding him—are not sharpened by his educational experience.

We tend to forget that in learning almost anything, there is no substitute for involvement. We learn to read by reading, to golf by golfing, and to analyze by analyzing. Learning to study human groups is no exception. Printed materials can help, but real depth of understanding requires direct experiences.

If the focus of our study is human groups, the fact that every group has characteristics similar to all other groups is very convenient. Every classroom is a potential laboratory. Every school club and team, every informal organization, every clique generates a never-ceasing stream of information about how human groups are organized and how they operate. Being accessible, they can be observed directly and constantly. They are not covered by copyright laws, the information they produce is always fresh and new, students who read less well than the average are not at a disadvantage, and no special equipment or materials are necessary.

Certainly there is a place for printed materials—for the comment of the expert, for additional evidence—but first-hand observation of social action is the most powerful learning tool.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTS:**

Despite the fact that almost no teacher will admit teaching for standardized tests, a possible drop in student test scores is almost always cited as a reason for a reluctance to try new ideas. As a consequence, teachers frequently teach what they think the testmakers are going to test, and the testmakers test what they think the teachers are teaching. The whole cycle is continually reinforced by the expectations of students, parents, administrators, and college admissions officers.

It's easy to condemn the situation, and also easy to overstate its seriousness. It may even be true that the test designers are ahead of many teachers, for in recent years there has been a steady increase in test items which are self-contained and include all the data to be analyzed. These kinds of questions require the student to demonstrate analytical skills rather than recall ability. Interestingly enough, it is also true that many teachers who emphasize higher-level cognitive skills are finding improvement in the student's ability to recall specific factual information.

But even if the tests weren't changing and the ability to recall were not improved by combining it with other cognitive processes, it would still be a mistake not to teach as well as we know how. Standardized tests do change to reflect changes in instruction, as experience in the other content areas amply demonstrates. They will change in social studies also, as broader process and content objectives are adopted.

## EVALUATION:

The question "How do I evaluate?" (which translated, frequently means "How do I determine and defend my grades?"), is easy or difficult depending upon what one is trying to evaluate. In social studies, we've usually made the task easy, but we've done it by evaluating only one cognitive process—recall.

But now we are saying we want students to think, and have begun to define more precisely what we mean by "thinking." Thinking means recalling, but it also means classifying, hypothesizing, and engaging in the full range of cognitive processes. Further, we want students to be able to apply these cognitive processes to social phenomena, to the analysis of how human groups are put together and how they usually behave.

How are we to know what students can do and how well they can do it? By making judgments about performance, by asking not, "What do they know?" but "What can they do?" If we want to determine whether a student can draw inferences, we have to give him data and ask him to draw inferences. If we want to evaluate his ability to hypothesize, he must be required to hypothesize. Can he apply these processes to social phenomena? The evaluation must require him to demonstrate that ability.

Unfortunately, if we accept this expanded basis for evaluation, we are faced with new and difficult problems. When we ask students to recall, we base our evaluation of their performance mostly on the quantity of their responses. But when we ask them to hypothesize or infer, responses will differ both quantitatively and **qualitatively**. Do two "good" hypotheses equal four "fair" and seven "poor" hypotheses? What is a "fair" hypothesis? A "poor" one?

There is no evading the issue. The more complex and sophisticated the objective, the greater the difficulties of evaluation. An increase in subjective judgments by the teacher is inevitable. There are no simple criteria for evaluating the quality of a student's cognitive processes applied to that most complex of all phenomena—human behavior.

THIS RATIONALE IS, PERHAPS, SOMEWHAT FRUSTRATING. IT DOES NOT OUTLINE SPECIFIC COURSE CONTENT; IT DOES NOT SUGGEST SEQUENTIAL CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES; AND IT DOES NOT STATE OBJECTIVES THAT COULD BE USED TO DEVELOP THESE ACTIVITIES.

WE HAVE ATTEMPTED ONLY TO CLARIFY A FEW GENERAL PRINCIPLES—PRINCIPLES THAT CAN PROVIDE A FOUNDATION FOR A COHERENT, EFFECTIVE SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM. THE TASK OF BUILDING THAT PROGRAM LIES AHEAD.

## **SOME FURTHER READING —**

Readings which may keep you thinking about some of the ideas in this rationale.

Bagby, Philip. **Culture and History**, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1959.

History sometimes seems isolated from the rest of the social sciences. In this book the author explores a marriage between history and cultural anthropology.

Benedict, Ruth. **The Chrysanthemum and the Sword**, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1946.

Ruth Benedict is spokesman for the group of social scientists that studied the culture of Japan for the U.S. Government during World War II. The book suggests the kinds of questions and observations that help one get "inside" another culture.

Bruner, Jerome S. **The Process of Education**, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1961.

This brief but important book forcefully argues that efficient and meaningful learning provides the student with a mental framework of concepts and relationships between concepts.

Fischer, D. H. **Historians' Fallacies**, Harper & Row, New York, 1970.

A presentation of common fallacies that occur in historical thinking. The author is an excellent historian as well as critic of other historical writers.

Hall, Edward T. **The Silent Language**, Doubleday & Co., Garden City, New York, 1959; **The Hidden Dimension**, Doubleday & Co., Garden City, New York, 1966.

Fascinating reading. Both books point out the frequent narrowness of the study of man and suggest important new concerns.

Larabee, H. A. **Reliable Knowledge: Scientific Methods in the Social Studies**, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1964.

An elaborate and comprehensive description of the logical processes in social science — obtaining and analyzing data, forming and testing hypotheses, etc.

Massialas, Byron G. and Zevin, Jack. **Creative Encounters in the Classroom: Teaching and Learning through Discovery**, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1967.

Provides a feeling for the kind of classroom atmosphere that makes inquiry easier.

Mills, C. Wright. **The Sociological Imagination**, Oxford University Press, New York, 1959, pages 139-142.

Some interesting observations about interdisciplinary social science.

Postman, Neil and Weingartner, Charles. **Teaching as a Subversive Activity**, Delacorte Press, New York, 1969.

Proposes (just as the title suggests) a form of subversion — teaching students to ask real, and therefore sometimes unwelcome and threatening, questions.

Redfield, Robert. **Human Nature and the Study of Society**, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962, pages 417-439.

A beautifully written essay outlining a content for social studies.

Redfield, Robert. **The Little Community**, University of Chicago Press, 1955.

A helpful summary of the variety of methods used by social scientists in the study of human groups.

Rosenblatt, Louise M. **Literature as Exploration (revised ed.)**, Noble & Noble Publishers, Inc., New York, 1968, pages 3-24.

A forceful reminder that literature and the social sciences, having humanity in common, are irrevocably intertwined. Both are concerned with examining the fundamental concepts of human nature and society in an attempt to foster a sounder understanding of life and nourish the development of balanced, humane personalities.

Toffler, Alvin. **Future Shock**, Random House, New York, 1970, pages 353-378.

Argues that if today's school systems are to prepare students for life in the future, "education must shift into the future tense," with one of its prime objectives being to increase the individual's "cope-ability" — the speed and economy with which he can adapt to continual change.

Williams, Robin Jr. **American Society: A Sociological Interpretation**, 2nd. ed., Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1970.

Especially interesting is Chapter 11, "Values and Beliefs in American Society."

#### PERIODICALS

Brady, Marion. **"A New Social Studies," Phi Beta Kappan**, October 1966, page 68; **"The Key Concept," Social Education**, November 1967, page 601.

These articles describe a unified approach to social science curriculum that uses the dominant ideas of a group as the primary key to understanding human behavior.

Vogt, Evon F. and Roberts, John M. **"A Study of Values," Scientific American**, Volume 195, Number 1, July 1956, page 25.

This article describes five groups with highly different cultures, all living in the same kind of environment in New Mexico. Each group's way of life is found to be intimately connected with that group's idea structure.